



# Shree H. N. Shukla Group of Colleges

## B. A. DEPARTMENT MATERIAL

CLASS: -S. Y. B. A. Semester -4

SUBJECT: - MAIN PAPER- 8

### THE GUIDE BY R.K.NARAYAN

#### Chapter 1

A man approaches [Raju](#) in the lonely temple ruins and he welcomes him. Raju asks him to sit down. Raju is sitting cross-legged on a granite slab as if it were a throne. It is evening and the birds are rustling near the river.

The man responds to some of Raju's companionable questions. Raju thinks to himself how he likes this rambling because he's been alone here for the day. He strokes his chin, and also thinks about how his last shave was two days ago and he paid for it with his money from jail.

The barber could tell he was just out, and told Raju as he shaved his face that he put his business here for a reason. The barber could also tell Raju did not do anything too bad, and asked what he will do next. Raju thoughtfully said he doesn't know.

The villager looks up reverentially at Raju as he sits on the higher step. Raju wishes he could blurt out that he is not holy and is only here because he wants to make sure people don't recognize him. As he is about to try and say he is not as great as the man imagines, the man states that he has a problem. Immediately Raju's old guide mentality comes back and he asks the man to tell him about it. Back in the day tourists always sought Raju out; it was "in his nature to get involved in other people's interests and activities" (4).

At a later stage, Raju will narrate his own story to this man, who is named [Velan](#). He will tell him that his troubles started with [Rosie](#). Interestingly, she called herself that, which is odd because she is just an Indian and not a foreigner. She is a dancer, and an orthodox one at that. Raju always used to praise her dancing. She was married to Marco, a grotesque man. From the moment Raju saw him, dressed like a perpetual tourist, he knew that this man was perfect for a guide like himself.

Why did Raju become a guide? It seems like it was fated. The railway was in his life from a young age. His parents' house was near the Malgudi station, and his father had built it long before trains were even thought of. His father had a small shop known as "the hut shop." Raju worked there often.

Raju's father taught him the Tamil alphabet and disciplined him if he messed up. Raju also learned arithmetic. Being confined to his father's company for hours was difficult, but eventually his father went to the shop and he was able to play at the tamarind tree with his marbles, iron hoop, and rubber ball. Sometimes his father took Raju to town when he went shopping, and there Raju marveled at the panorama of life he saw there. He drowsily watched the activities of the marketplace.

The man interrupts Raju's reveries and says he has a problem. Raju states that everyone does. He feels confident that he appears saintly. The man tells Raju his name is Velan and his father's last wife's daughter lives with them. The girl shows no gratitude for all the things he has given her



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and she does not want to accept the plans for her marriage. She ran away, and Velan had to search for her and bring her back. Now she sulks in her room all day. He asks Raju what to do.

Raju tells Velan to bring the girl to him. Velan is grateful and tries to touch Raju's feet, but Raju says it is not permitted. He is feeling more and more saintly.

That evening, Raju watches the river and listens to the rustling of the trees. He cannot sleep and decides to count the stars, especially as people will be impressed when he can tell them how many there are. He loses count though, and falls sleep.

The next morning, Velan brings his half-sister. Raju is flustered and wants to be alone for his morning ablutions, so he makes them wait. When he reemerges, he sees the food and drink the visitors have brought him. He is not unhappy, having learned to accept any opportunity for food.

Raju begins to feel like this adulation of him is right and normal. He tells the story of Devaka, a man from ancient times but he cannot remember the end. He lapses into silence. Velan is not perturbed; he is a perfect disciple.

Raju's thoughts go back to his mother and her stories. She would tell them while they waited for his father to come home at night. He loved staying out late with his friends and visitors, discussing litigations and prices of grain and rainfall and more. He ignored food and sleep, and would tell Raju when he came to get him to just set some food and milk aside.

Raju would then run back home, but he had to go through a dark patch that always gave him a cold sweat and made him think of wild animals or supernatural beings. His mother would sit with him once inside, and her presence was comforting. He would ask for a story and she would commence telling one.

Back in the present moment, Raju feels a sense of irritation because he'd rather think of his own problems. He tells Velan he cannot think of his problems right now but will do so when the time is ripe. Velan does not protest and stands humbly to leave. Somewhat mollified, Raju asks if this is the sister. Velan assents. Raju says that with time he will have a solution. Time is needed for the proper understanding. He is proud of his words.

He asks himself though, if he has been in prison or some transmigration. Raju looks at the girl and says what must happen will happen.

Velan and the sister cross the river and Raju watches them go.

### Chapter 2

There is a great deal of activity in front of Raju's childhood home, and the family soon learns the trains are coming. A mountain of dirt rises and trucks are busy all day. Raju loves the exciting changes, the talk of the workers, and the special metal objects he finds and treasures. He does not



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like other boys coming near what he sees as his domain and curses one. His father reprimands him and says he must go to school.

Raju is terribly depressed to be taken from his kingdom. He has no choice, though, and his father enjoys bragging to others that his son is being educated. It is a long walk to the school and Raju is almost always late. He wishes he could go to Albert Mission School, which is closer, but his father insists that they try to convert students to Christianity there.

Raju's school is a *pyol* school, meaning lessons are taught in the *pyol* of an old gentleman's house. The man is stern, abusive, and irritated by the mere presence of his students. He only cares for the money he gets for teaching them and the gifts the parents send. That is when he is most obliging to the boys.

Raju does learn enough to qualify for the first standard in Board High School. He can read and do some multiplication. The old master is actually quite proud of Raju and two other boys for making it that far.

Back in the present, Velan comes before Raju brimming with excitement. He declares there has been a miracle—his sister has decided to comply with everything they ask of her. Her marriage is soon, and the household is happy and light. Raju asks if he is moving quickly before the girl changes her mind, and Velan is impressed with Raju's insight. Raju doesn't want every single thing he says to be considered genius, so he says sharply that it is an ordinary guess.

Raju's own smartness is beginning to unsettle him. Velan invites him to the wedding but he does not go. This does not save him though, for Velan brings the girl and her new husband to Raju. The girl says authoritatively that Raju has to only look at you and you are changed.

Raju's circle gradually widens. More and more people arrive. Raju says nothing. They sit quietly and demurely. Raju is uncomfortable; he has the day to himself but at night the villagers are there. One night, he actually hides from them and he hears them concernedly wondering if he has gone away. He hears their voices trail away. After they leave, Raju finds the food they left and is grateful for it. He hopes Velan and the others will never think he is too good for food.

The next morning, Raju considers his situation. Should he go back to Malgudi? He cannot work out in the real world. How else will he get food? He decides he must stay here.

That evening Raju assumes his pose of beatitude. He has decided to look as brilliant and radiant as he can and not hold back. He even feels a certain excitement as he anticipates the villagers' arrival. However, there is no sign of anyone. His fears return. He wishes he could go search for Velan but that is undignified.

He spots a boy grazing sheep on the opposite bank and calls him over. He announces he is the new priest of this temple and will give him a plantain. The boy explains that he does not come here usually because of the crocodiles, but that his uncle asked him to in order to see if the holy man was there. Raju gives him the plantain and tells him to tell his uncle the man is back.



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### Chapter 3

The station building is finally ready. It seems as if Raju's world is neatly divided into one side of the railroad and the other. The building is decorated and people gather to celebrate. Police guard the platform as people flock around. Several important people give speeches. Raju's father's shop has record sales that day.

Over time, the trains bring more prosperity to Raju's father, who buys a horse and carriage. Raju's mother is skeptical about all of this and nags his father incessantly. As they become the talk of the town, she sees them as too vain. Whenever his father is not using the horse, she berates him. His father seems to be less aggressive lately and seriously begins to think about getting rid of the horse.

A blacksmith proposes to rent out the horse, but the horse's groom offers Raju's father another deal: let him ply it for use in the market. This works out well for a few days, but the groom stops finding business and begs for remission. It seems he has misappropriated his funds, and he starts to complain that the horse is getting too skinny. The man offers to buy the horse and carriage and Raju's father, exhausted, agrees. They are all glad to be rid of it.

Raju's father is given the privilege of running a shop at the railway station. It is so spacious that when his father fills it with articles from the hut shop, it looks empty. The stationmaster comes by, and Raju's father is very deferential to him. The man orders Raju's father to fill it up more and Raju's father, seeing the stationmaster as a god-like figure, agrees with alacrity. He purchases more goods and fills the shop.

Raju is put in charge of the smaller shop. He does not know what to do about all the old people who hang around there whom his father used to converse with, and over time his father ends up back at the hut shop and Raju works at the new shop. Raju's schooling drops off unobtrusively.

### Chapter 4

Everyone in the village is pleased the holy man is back at his post and they arrive in a great mass. Raju sees young boys and asks what they are studying. They say nothing and an elder says they cannot send their boys to school as they do in town because they have to graze cattle. Raju asserts that boys must read, so perhaps they can gather here in the evenings and learn. He asks to see the schoolteacher.

The next day, a timid man arrives, but it is Raju who is nervous at first when his latent fears of teachers rise back up in him. Raju is not very clear-headed after his sleep and asks the teacher a few questions. The teacher finally asks if Raju had said something about educating the boys here. Raju replies that if he needs a place he can have it. The teacher demurs, but suddenly Raju is authoritative and says it is their duty to make everyone happy and wise. The teacher is struck by Raju's magnanimity and goes back to the village a changed man.



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He returns with about a dozen boys. He asks Raju to speak to them and Raju does, marveling at how wise he sounds as he speaks of godliness and cleanliness and the epics. Years ago, Raju had always read a lot during his shopping days. Sometimes schoolboys left books there.

His father died suddenly during the rainy part of the year. His mother adjusted to being a widow; she had enough to live on. Raju closed down the hut shop and worked full time at the station shop. He began stocking newspapers, magazines, and books, and enjoyed talking with people. Students often gathered there.

Everyone is impatient to return in the evenings to the holy man's place. The children extol the merits of what they heard. Raju feels like an actor as the people circle around him in the pillared hall. He tells the teacher to take the boys to a corner to read and learn, and that he must speak to the elders. He is concerned, though, because he does not know what to speak of. The only thing he can speak with authority on is jail life and its benefits, such as being mistaken for a saint. He wishes he could just call them fools and tell them to leave him alone with his food.

Finally, Raju says he will speak to them all another day, and that they ought to spend their time thinking about their thoughts and actions from the day. This confuses some of them, especially as they are just cattle drivers and not philosophers. Raju says simply that if they do it they will know why, and marvels to himself that being a saint seems to be merely saying pithy things. He picks three men and says they must come back tomorrow and repeat six words they said.

The next day, Raju beats a soft rhythm and chants a holy song. Others join in and the ancient ceiling echoes with their voices. Some people have brought little pictures of gods and women begin to decorate the space. Raju realizes his spiritual status will go higher if he grows a beard and long hair.

By the time he gets this hair, his prestige has grown beyond his wildest dreams. His gatherings overflow into the corridor and to the river's edge. Raju doesn't know names except Velan's, but the people do not care. They bring him sick children and their quarrels and concerns. He barely has a private life anymore and feels the strain. He likes when he can be a normal man for a few minutes.

### Analysis

*The Guide* is often considered Narayan's best work for its humor, complexity, and gentle irony. It is one of the "Malgudi" novels, meaning that it features Narayan's fictional town (see "Other" in this study guide). Raju's narration of his childhood fleshes this place out, giving readers a sense of its bustling activity and navigation of modernity (in this case, the railroad). Critic Charles R. Larson sees Malgudi as "predominantly comic, reflecting with humor the struggle of the individual consciousness to find peace within the framework of public life."

As a child, many of Raju's characteristics that are notable when he is an adult are already manifesting themselves: he likes talking to people, he likes money, he does not like when someone else trespasses on what he perceives as his property (e.g., when he is a child it is the



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other little boy on his dirt heap, and when he is an adult it is friends of Rosie claiming her time), and he values complete freedom to do what he wants. School annoys him, as does listening to his parents. He is most alive when he can talk to people and, potentially, guide them.

The title of the novel, then, is an obvious nod to what it is about: Raju is a guide, first as “Railway Raju,” then as Rosie’s career coach, then as the putative holy man (the dichotomy between his skills as a guide and his lack of understanding of his own psyche will be explored throughout the rest of the text). He stumbles into the holy man position completely by accident because a simple villager, Velan, mistakes him for one. Raju is used to pretending and since his options are limited, he immediately embraces the position Velan inadvertently levies upon him. Without even knowing what Raju’s past as the tour guide and as Rosie’s lover contains, the reader can already tell this is a man who is full of himself and who relishes even a modicum of people’s admiration. When Velan first sits down “[Raju] had experienced a feeling of importance” (9) and admires his own deliverance of pontifical statements. Within a few minutes “he felt he was attaining the stature of a saint” (10) and “had already begun to feel that the adulation directed to him was inevitable” (11-12). He thinks himself brilliant and decides to “let drop gems of thought from his lips, assume all the radiance available, and afford them all the guidance they required without stint” (25). Narayan’s tone is gentle but highly ironic. After all, Raju is a convicted criminal just out of jail, mostly uneducated, and not at all religious or trained to be a holy man. He has no business telling parables or giving advice.

To an extent, though, Raju knows this. He evinced some hesitation and nervousness about this new role, and more than once thinks he ought to flee. He cannot remember the end to some of his maxims and often has to make up things. To be honest, if Velan weren’t so gullible and simple-minded, or if the small fragments of advice Raju stumbled into giving to Velan’s sister, who then told the whole village of Raju’s power, hadn’t been so well received, it is likely his time in the ruins would have been short-lived.

In these first few chapters, Narayan jumps back and forth from the contemporary moment where Raju is a holy man to his childhood. The structure of the novel is thus somewhat complex in that there is a third-person narration of Raju-as-holy-man and a first-person narration by Raju himself that is told to Velan, though the reasons for and the timing of that narration are not yet clear. The two stories could have been told in the same fashion, as critic T.C. Ghai writes, but their superimposition is purposeful. In Raju’s own narration, the story goes from childhood to jail “when he comes out unchanged, unrepentant, and without any awareness of his true nature. That is why he is ready to play the imposter again when he foresees the possibilities of his new situation into which he has been placed by Velan’s mistaking him for a saint. Raju takes the decision without any inner struggle at all.” In the other narration, “Raju, caught inescapably into the network of his own creation, moves toward self-awareness and sainthood.” Ghai finds this form too haphazard, seeing the two narrators’ voices as indistinguishable from each other and Raju’s narration is too prosaic and leisurely. However, other critics such as John Thieme, see it as more valuable. Thieme praises the “dialectical interplay” and believes that the “first-person narrative clearly enlightens sympathy for a character whose transgressive behavior might otherwise



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seem reprehensible, while the third-person ‘camera eye’ view of him in his sadhu persona withholds judgement on the issue of whether the former tourist guide can now reasonably be viewed as a spiritual guide.”

### Chapter 5

Raju remembers how he used to be known as “Railway Raju.” Everyone asked for him and respected his opinion; he never told them he didn’t know the answer. He helped people find their way, and enlisted the old man Gaffur and his car to take the tourists where they wanted to go. Raju notes that travelers are enthusiastic and don’t mind inconvenience as long as there is something to see. Raju doesn’t understand this but doesn’t care; it is not his place to ask questions. He gets to know the sorts of people who travel in the area. There are scholarly types whom Raju lets do most of the talking. There are more innocent ones whom Raju speaks to freely, making up glorious facts or exaggerating others.

The porter’s son now sits in the shop almost all day while Raju acts as a guide. He comes back to check the money. His mother wonders why he neglects the shop and Raju says he does not, and that he likes being a guide because people know him, ask for him, and give him food. He also finds talking to people interesting. She is mollified.

When a train comes into town, Raju knows exactly where to stand and what to do to get a tourist to notice him. He has an eye for them and has his classifications for them. There are passionate photographers whom he helps take to the right places. He waits to figure out how much cash the person will have first, though, and then decides how many hours of places he will show him.

Raju is quite skilled at making calls in a split second. He sees which tourists engage porters and which hook their own bags on their fingers. He sees which ones will want a nice room and which will want one just for sleeping. He carefully scrutinizes those who come to him, knowing they won’t be clearheaded right after their journey. He draws out what the person’s interests are.

After a long time being a guide, Raju knows no two people have the same interests. Taste differs. Some want to see ruins, others hydroelectric plants, others pretty vistas. Some want to get drunk, others want to find poetry in nature. Some want Raju to tell them everything, others want to instruct him on the facts. Raju is polite and amenable to all situations. He makes decent money, especially during special times such as the elephant herd trapping.

Once there is a girl who says all she wants to see is a king cobra dancing to a flute. Her male companion chides her, which annoys Raju because he finds the girl very enticing.

The man arrives first. Raju finds him strange but puts him up in the Anand Bhavan Hotel. The man, who Raju learns is named Marco, sightsees for a day and then tells Raju another person is coming. When Raju sees the girl, Rosie, he finds her appealing. She is not gorgeous but she has a lovely figure and dusky skin.



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One day, Raju takes [Marco](#) to the caves and carvings he wants to see, and tells the girl he can take her to see the king cobra. Rosie asks her husband and he shoos her away and says he will see her back at the hotel.

Gaffur and Raju take Rosie to a group of huts on the other side of the river. Raju asks for the snake and a man prods it in the basket. It rises up and children run off screaming then return. Rosie calls for the man to play a flute and he complies. The snake writhes about. Rosie is mesmerized by it.

When they return, Marco tells Raju what time to bring the car around tomorrow. Raju is privately annoyed; he hates this man and does not like that he just orders the car and does not say where he is going.

The next morning, Gaffur and his car are waiting at the hotel. Raju asks where the couple is and Gaffur replies that they said they'd be down soon. Something in Gaffur's manner bothers Raju; he thinks Gaffur must be trying to impress Rosie as well, and he feels jealous.

Raju goes upstairs and knocks. Marco opens the door fully dressed and ready to go. He exits and closes it. He informs Raju he wants to study the friezes again, then see cave paintings. Raju calculates how much this will cost in his head. He informs Marco they will probably be gone for a whole day and may not get back before the evening.

Marco sighs that Raju probably has no idea how to deal with women. Raju, feeling bold, asks what the trouble is. Marco is friendlier than he ever has been, and says the fairer sex does not lead to peace.

Raju has an idea, and ventures to ask if he might try talking to her. Marco brightens and tells him he can try. Raju goes back upstairs and knocks. He says it is he, not her husband. Raju lowers his voice and tells Rosie he cannot get the sight of her dancing form out of his head. She opens the door. With bright, tearful eyes she looks at him. She asks why he wants her to come out with that awful man. Raju leans in and says without her life would be blank. Raju expects her to shut the door on him angrily but she is amused. She tells him to wait.

Raju can barely restrain himself from bursting in. Marco comes upstairs, and is amazed when Raju says Rosie is coming.

Rosie comes downstairs and the three of them join Gaffur in the car. Gaffur warns them they may have to stay at Peak House tonight. Rosie dashes upstairs to get her and her husband a change of clothing. It seems things are better between them, but the air is still a bit tense.

The group reaches Peak House at four in the afternoon. The caretaker is pleased to see Raju since he brings him so much business. Raju asks Marco for money for food and supplies. Marco is hesitant when Raju does that until he tells him he will get receipts.





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Peak House is on a cliff in the Mempi Hills and has stunning views of the jungle below. It is “like heaven to those who loved wild surroundings” (57), and Rosie is in ecstasy with all the plants and flowers. Marco merely seems annoyed.

Joseph the caretaker brings them their food and shows them the coal stove. He warns them to keep their door locked. He says they can sit on the veranda and watch tigers and other animals below. Joseph leaves.

Raju knows his way around the kitchen and serves the food after watching a glorious sunset. Once, his hand touches Rosie’s and he is nearly insensate. He cannot stop thinking about her but wonders if it is wrong because of Marco.

Rosie asks Marco to join her on the veranda but he says she wants to be alone, so she asks Raju to join her. In the dark, Rosie asks about the various animals. Raju can only think of her beauty and wishes he could gush his love for her, but thankfully he restrains himself because Marco quietly joins them.

The next morning, the mood is sour between the two. Marco says he is ready to see the caves and when Raju asks about the lady, Marco snaps not to worry about her. Raju wonders what terrible things happen every night between the two of them that make the mornings so miserable.

Raju is bitter as he leads Marco outside. Marco strides ahead without knowing where he is going, and Raju finally asks if he knows the route. Marco is surprised and says no, and Raju takes over. At the cave, Marco is visibly excited and talks volubly. It is clear he likes dead and decaying things; how could Rosie be with him?

Inside the cave, Marco examines the cave paintings. Raju is bored as the hours pass. Finally, he says he will go back, and tells Marco to take the same route home. Marco ignores him and keeps up his examinations.

Back at Peak House, Rosie calls out to Raju from a stone wall under a tree. He joins her. She asks if Marco is still cave-gazing and Raju says yes. He asks her what she is interested in, and she says anything but old stone walls.

Raju thinks this must be his moment and asks why she and Marco quarrel. He adds that he cannot fathom how anyone would quarrel with her. She asks what he means, and he pours out his immense love for her. He speaks of that love between comments on her art of dancing. Rosie is pleased but says he is like a brother.

Reckless, Raju asks why she married Marco. She admits it was for money and that she is from a caste of people dedicated to temples as dancers. All women in her family stretching back generations were dancers. When Rosie was young she danced in a village temple; her caste is viewed as public women and are not respectable.



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Raju assures her that modern India is different and there is no such thing as caste. Rosie goes on about how she went to college and then afterward thought about what to do. She saw an advertisement asking for an educated, beautiful woman to be a wife to a rich man and decided to take it, especially as there were no caste requirements.

Raju is surprised at all of this but she defends her choice even though she is sad. Raju feels for her, and tells her he would have made her a queen in this place.

The group learns Gaffur cannot come until the following day but they are fine. Marco is pleased to have more time to study the walls. Raju studies the couple. When Gaffur does arrive, Marco says he'd like to stay longer and hopes Raju will go back to the hotel, fetch his things, and then come back here with him. Raju hesitates, but this is part of his job. He agrees. Rosie says she wants to go back as well.

Gaffur watches the two of them in the car but they do not talk or touch.

The next day, Raju takes Rosie all over town and shows her with great zest the sights of Malgudi. She is like an excited child and marvels at everything. Once Gaffur warns him that she is married and he waves him off angrily.

Rosie likes the market, hotel and cinema. It is a lovely, long day and Raju walks her back to the hotel. At the door, he hesitates and asks feebly if he should leave. Equally feebly she says yes. On impulse he gently nudges her aside and enters. She follows.

### Chapter 6

Raju loses count of time after trying to heed the cycles of seasons. His beard now caresses his chest, his hair is down his back, and he wears prayer beads. The villagers bring him so many things that he loses interest in getting more; he distributes everything at the end of the day. He asks [Velan](#) to stop, but they love gift-giving. They also begin calling him swami.

Raju loves the evening rains and how cozy they make the gatherings, but one day he notices that the sky never dims with clouds. He asks and Velan says sadly that the rains are not there and crops are beginning to die. Raju gives them comforting words but is disturbed when he goes down to the river to see how it has shrunk.

The signs begin to manifest more. Reports come in of sugar canes wilting. The people float all manner of theories, including science, religion, mythology, weather, and more. Raju tells them not to think of it too much but even his words are offering little comfort. The village wells are drying up and people come in waves to the river. There they quarrel and lament.

One day, Velan tells Raju a buffalo has died. Raju wishes he could say he can do nothing about it, but Velan asks if he can see it. To Raju, the people are "clearly losing their heads. They are entering a nightmare phase" (72). A small crowd follows Raju as he walks to the buffalo. Reports filter in of cholera in a neighboring village.



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Raju inspects the buffalo. The people are somewhat relieved it is from a different village, and Raju adds to this by saying it seems to have died from a poisonous bite.

More cattle begin to die. The shopkeeper has to raise prices and people become angry and start fights. The air is filled with curses and shouts. Raju is concerned with their agitation and wonders if he ought to find a new place.

In the morning, Velan's brother comes to him and tells him Velan was injured. Raju gives advice but privately wonders if maybe this brother himself did it; after all, the brothers were all involved in litigation. Raju counsels rest for Velan but the brother says that is impossible, as they have to get ready for their big battle tonight.

Raju looks at the brother. He is of lesser intelligence and spends his days grazing cattle in the mountains. He only speaks to the cattle during the day and is very rude and abusive to them. He never visits Raju except for today because he feels like there are no other options, and he should get the swami's blessing.

This man annoys Raju, especially as he tries to say he wasn't the first to hit the shopkeeper, so he sighs that no one should fight. He does not like the idea of so much commotion because what if it attracts attention and the police come? He forcefully tells the boy to go tell Velan and the others not to fight and he will tell them what to do later. The boy is frightened.

Raju adds that he will not eat until they are good. The boy barely understands and out of terror of this wild man runs away.

He goes to the assembly of men gathered under an ancient tree. The elders are discussing the rain and fight. They have misgivings, especially because they do not want the swami to know about it and disapprove.

When the boy bursts in, he starts blubbing and the others can barely understand what he is saying. He says the swami will not eat and says "no fight." The men perk up at this and the boy feels like he should not have said anything about the fight. He lies and says he told the swami that there is no rain. The men laugh and pat his head. He remembers he must be clear about the not eating and reasserts this.

The men buzz with excitement because they think Raju is being like Gandhi and refusing food until things improve. He will fast out of love for them and the rains will come. They forget their troubles and bickering.

The village stirs. A crocodile is found dead. The river recedes and an ancient temple is unearthed. The fight is settled amiably and the people en masse decide to visit the swami.



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## B. A. DEPARTMENT MATERIAL

CLASS: -S. Y. B. A. Semester -4

SUBJECT: - MAIN PAPER- 8

Raju is waiting for his gifts and food. His mind wanders to new recipes and his old favorite foods and cravings. When he hears voices, he is relieved but a little puzzled at how large the crowd is. Perhaps he prevented the fight and people are grateful.

The people approach and soften their voices. The women get busy cleaning and lights are lit. Raju reads quietly while they work. He reads a passage aloud and discusses food and God's goodness. They listen politely for an hour but then Velan says their prayers will be answered and the swami will save their village. Raju is puzzled, but thinks these are just normal praises for him.

Women come to touch his feet and when he protests they all say he is not a man but a Mahatma. The crowd presses in and will not leave him alone. They gaze on him with more intensity than normal. They thank him and stumble through their words of thanks. Raju ruminates that perhaps his presence really is that glorious.

Time passes and Raju is confused that they are not presenting food or leaving. He cannot ask though, and all Velan will say is that he is undertaking a great sacrifice and they simply want to be at his side.

Finally, Velan asks if Raju thinks the rains will come tomorrow. Confused, Raju says it might if it is God's will. Velan proceeds to tell him of what he thinks Raju is going to do—stand in the river water, look to the sky, utter prayers for two weeks, and fast the whole time. Raju is stunned; he remembered saying all this long ago to fill an evening. He knows he cannot be surprised and thinks maybe this is the time to be serious and attach meaning to his own words. He “now sees the enormity of his own creation” (85).

Raju turns to Velan and says he must be alone tonight and the day tomorrow and that Velan must come to him tomorrow night alone. This sounds important and Velan agrees. The people depart.

Raju's body aches from sitting. His mind is tormented. He does not know how he can survive without food. He wishes he'd known this scenario he made up would apply to him so he could have tweaked the parameters. He thinks about running away, but then remembers the women and children touching his feet and how grateful they were.

His solution is to dip into his extra food that he kept for a second meal at night; this will help him survive.

When Velan comes the next day Raju asks him straightforwardly what it is about him that makes Velan think he can bring the rain. Velan is perplexed.

Raju calls him to sit and says he must listen to him. He feels terrible that he will have to shatter the illusion but it is the only thing he can do. He begins to speak, admitting he is not a saint and is a normal man. Raju's voice fills the night. Velan listens seriously and says nothing; “there are lines of care on his face” (87).



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### Analysis

In these chapters there are two significant events that will alter the course of Raju's life: meeting Rosie and getting himself involved in a fast to bring the rains. In regards to the first, Raju demonstrates his lack of character in pursuing another man's wife, justifying it because he thinks Marco is a "grotesque" and rude man, and appealing to Rosie's love of dancing to secure her affection.

The character of Marco is a compelling one as he is passive but his actions end up mattering a great deal to the course of Raju and Rosie's lives. He is primarily interested in "dead and decaying things" (62) and "cold, old stone walls" (63) as Rosie puts it. He is constantly immersed in dark caves, out of the sunlight of real life. Metaphorically this points to his ignorance of Rosie and Raju's affair; it also helps cement the fact that Marco is not interested in his living, breathing wife as a human being. Though she may have done wrong to have an affair, Marco was undeniably harsh and dismissive of her throughout their marriage. Later when he discovers the affair he is justifiably aggrieved and angry, but his marmoreal nature asserts itself and he treats Rosie worse than she actually deserves.

Rosie is more complex than either Marco or Raju. She first appears to be a simple, childish being who delights in things like a cobra dancing to a flute and the saccharine compliments of a tour guide. However, not only is she college educated, but she demonstrates even early on that she makes her own choices in life. Coming from a dancer caste, the women of which are considered "public" and low-class, she does not want to languish there poor and disrespected.

She *chooses* to marry Marco because he does not care about caste; though she does not love him, she does what she thinks is best. Her life with Marco is mostly miserable, and though with Raju it will not be much better, it is still a path for her to eventually become completely free.

Raju is compelled by Rosie's beauty and her sad story. He ignores the warnings of his mother and Gaffur and eventually tanks his entire life in order to be with her. One wonders what is exactly so beguiling about Rosie that Raju would do this; yes, she is attractive, but is that enough for Raju's single-minded obsession? For him to set aside some of the things that make him tick, such as working with tourists and being seen as indispensable and an expert? What does Raju get out of this relationship besides the obvious (sex)? A few hypotheses include: 1) he does not like Marco as a person and delights to an extent in fooling him; 2) he sees that Rosie is in need of comfort and he likes feeling needed; 3) he likes the intrigue and putatively low-stakes danger; 4) he never really had any friends or engagement in his community anyway, and this adds color to his life; and 5) he lacks insight into himself and cannot see the road ahead of him—i.e., he does not realize or care to realize what he is doing to his life because all that matters is the here and now.

In the contemporary narration Raju becomes used to his new life as a holy man. Ever an actor, he looks the part and is completely revered by the community. His qualms about remaining are mostly gone, but he does toy with leaving once the villagers start to become distressed about the drought and concomitant famine. His maxims and parables only go so far in alleviating starvation. However, Raju finds karma catching up with him in terms of his making up stories



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about holy men and their deeds. He had no idea that through a few twists of fate—Velan’s brother finally coming to see him at the height of the villagers’ turmoil, accidentally mentioning the fighting, trying to cover it up to the elders, and mixing up exactly what Raju said about fasting—that he would become responsible for ending the terrible drought via fasting and praying. If there was any time to leave it would be now, but Raju has been here long enough that he doesn’t find that to be so easy. He “felt that after all the time had come for him to be serious” (84) and “felt moved by the recollection of the big crowd of women and children touching his feet” (86). These thoughts show a growth in his character, especially when he decides he will tell the truth to Velan.

### Chapter 7

Raju becomes almost like a member of the family; he gives up almost all of his old life to be near Rosie. Marco keeps his hotel room but stays for over a month at Peak House. Gaffur’s car is almost permanently engaged. Rosie goes to Marco a couple days a week and seems to Raju to be too nice to the man.

Raju tries to avoid gossip and does not like when he and Gaffur are alone. Raju is also worried about not looking nice enough for Rosie so he spends a great deal of money on his appearance. Unfortunately, he is not paying very much attention to the boy running the shop and checks in only perfunctorily.

His focus on Rosie and Marco means other tourists looking for him go away disappointed. Raju does not like the boy pestering him about taking on these new clients. He doesn’t want to think about anything; everything tires him, especially his mother’s nagging and his dwindling funds. All his mental powers are focused on Rosie.

He is also stressed that the desk-man at the hotel is taking note of when he comes to see Rosie. He wonders if he ought to change the location but there is no way to do this without causing trouble for both Rosie and Marco seem to like the place.

Rosie is a source of concern for Raju now. She is losing her carefree manner and seems to be showing extra consideration for her husband. She tells Raju she cannot simply leave Marco alone and disrespect him like that. Sometimes she cries that she is doing him wrong, and “distance seemed to lend enchantment to her view now” (94). As for Marco, he loves his solitude and seems much more content in his studies.

Rosie’s eyes finally light up when Raju mentions dance to her. This was what he’d first admired in her and he tells her he’d do anything to see her dance. Brightening, Rosie begins to practice for hours a day. In one corner of her room, she sets up a statue of Nataraja (the god of dancers), burns incense, studies the ancient works of art in large tomes, and focuses on how to keep the classical purity in her art. She is incredibly focused on details and spend every moment of the day preparing for performances. Raju is baffled by her fervor but knows he must maintain his excitement for dance because it is what keeps them intimate. He asks her questions and shows himself amenable to learning, and she loves to share her knowledge with him.



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When she practices, Raju watches with delight. He does not know exactly what it all means but he is very moved by the composition and the symbolism. He watches for a solid hour and his mind is free from carnal thoughts; she is merely an abstraction and he is enthralled.

The issue now is talking to Marco to see if she will be able to pursue dance as a career. She is nervous because he does not like when she talks about dance, but she has a modicum of confidence as she and Raju head to Peak House one day.

Marco is very cheerful as he greets the two of them. He speaks excitedly about what he has discovered and the book he is working on; the book, he explains, will change all ideas about the history of civilization. Rosie anxiously tends to him and pretends to be interested in what he is saying. Marco is rhapsodic about his life here, particularly in terms of Joseph, who seems to anticipate all his needs.

Raju listens to all of this and is ill at ease. He does not want Marco to get angry and hurt Rosie, nor does he want Marco to so nice that Rosie goes back to him. It is an impossible situation.

Raju has to leave and then returns to them in two days. While waiting for them to come back from the cave, he strikes up a conversation with Joseph, telling him how much Marco is pleased with him. [Joseph](#) scoffs and says that this is his job and it is necessary for him to do all this. He likes Marco but he likes him better when Rosie is not here, as he thinks of her as a nag. After a time, Raju decides he will go down to the cave. When the couple starts approaching him, he sees Marco does not want to talk to him and Rosie looks morose. All he can do is follow them back to the house, where Marco says neither he nor Joseph are needed and shuts the door. Raju is confused. Gaffur approaches to ask when they are going back and bitterly Raju says he ought to stay and watch the show. Gaffur looks at him and tells him to go back to his normal life because he was happier then. Raju says nothing; he knows this is a reasonable request but he can do nothing.

Finally, Marco emerges and asks Gaffur if he is ready to go. He strides out. Raju tries the door and it is locked. He is puzzled and courageously walks down to Marco in the car and asks where he is going. Marco says he is going to the hotel to close his account. When Raju asks why, he replies that he does not have to explain. Gaffur asks if anyone else is coming and Marco says no.

Raju assumes an authoritative tone with Gaffur and then opens Marco's door and pulls him out. Marco is stunned as Raju begins to tell him he wants to talk to him, that he can't go away like this, that he must talk. He tells Gaffur to wait. Marco looks at Raju and asks what his business is with him. Raju replies that he has done a great deal for him and helped him, but Marco says that is over now. Raju asks if he will come back inside, as there is a second room he can get to be out of his sight and they can settle all their accounts. Marco sighs his assent.

Marco goes to his room and Raju to his. He sees the gorgeous sunset over the trees and wishes Rosie could see it. He has no idea what to do. He wanders to the kitchen where the food is. He knows both Rosie and Marco must be starving.



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Boldly, Raju walks up to their door and pushes it open. He sees Marco sitting miserably and vacantly at his table. Rosie is lying on her bed with her swollen eyes shut. She tells Raju when she sees him that he must leave them alone. Stunned, Raju protests but she curtly and angrily tells him numerous times to go. Finally, Raju leaves and goes down to Gaffur and tells him they are leaving. On the drive out, Gaffur states it is for the best and his elders can now find a wife for him.

Raju now enters one of the most miserable periods in his entire life. He has no interest in food or sleep. He has no stability and does not care for his job anymore. He only goes through the motions and his mind is perpetually on Rosie. His mother asks what is wrong and he lies and says nothing. He cannot figure out why Rosie was so duplicitous, why she kicked him out and stayed with Marco. As for his financial situation, Raju has no care to make money. Regular life bores and terrifies him. The days pass in a blur.

One day, to his surprise, Raju's mother tells him someone is here to see him. It is Rosie, standing with her trunk and bag. He immediately tells his mother that Rosie is a guest and will be staying with them. He is horrified at his appearance though, and is thus grateful when his mother says she will take Rosie with her to the well.

Before that, though, Raju's mother evinces surprise and admiration that the girl is all alone and that she is educated with a master's degree. She admires that she can pay for things and asks what job Rosie will do now. Raju simply sits there and wonders how Rosie being a guest will work out given their small space, but there is no choice—she must stay with them.

Raju knows it is a luxury but he decides to engage Gaffur for the day to take Rosie out. First Gaffur is sour, but recovers his good humor. Raju asks Gaffur to take them to the river. It is a lovely evening and people are about. Shops sparkle and children play and donkeys bray and couples stroll. Raju says he and Rosie will walk.

It is now darkening. Rosie and Raju stroll for a bit and then sit, and Raju proceeds to ask her questions. He can get no real response from her for a while, however. She swings back and forth and is unclear. Finally, he asks her to tell her tale in order, step by step, and she complies.

She begins by saying Marco was happy that day until she brought up dancing. She had pretended interest in everything he wanted to show her and even went into a scary, stuffy dark cave for him. When she saw drawings in the cave that looked like dancing she finally mustered the courage to ask if she could dance. He excoriated it as a useless, stupid act and she kept quiet, hoping if she swallowed these insults he may weaken over time. In the evening, he was better, and she decided she would show him part of her dance. She brought him into the room and started, but he stopped her almost right away and said he'd seen enough. She was ashamed and upset, as she thought he'd be captivated by it. Unfortunately, she said other people saw it and liked it. It was too late for her to take back her words, and Marco asked who and when and why. Eventually everything came tumbling out and Marco knew everything. They sat until dawn. She fell asleep and when she woke he had gone to the caves.





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Rosie thought she had made a terrible mistake and had been wrong in everything she did and said. She was terrified and morose. She went down to the caves but he proceeded to ignore her presence. In fact, he ignored her absolutely for days and days (during this time was when Raju saw them). Three weeks passed and she could take it no longer. Her voice cracking, she asked if he had punished her enough. He replied that this is his last word to her, that she can go where she pleases or do what she pleases. She begged him to let her stay with him but he would not relent. He said he wished he had never married.

One day, he started packing and she knew he was going to their home in Madras. She wanted to go too and packed, but at the train he told her he had no ticket for her and shut the door on her. This was when she came to him.

Rosie concludes her story, sobbing. Raju comforts her and says he will work to make her the greatest artist of her time.

Raju's mother is not happy about this but he cares little. Rosie begins to practice and her spirits rise. She helps Raju's mother assiduously in all tasks but the older woman still complains to Raju. She has been listening to the town's gossip and whispers often to Raju that Rosie is a snake woman and she never liked her. Raju, exasperated, says she is a refugee and has nowhere to go. Raju's mother snaps that she ought to go back to her husband.

Raju's mother begins to tell stories of husbands and wives in Rosie's presence to get at her, and Raju knows she smarts under those lessons. However, he is scared of his mother and feels helpless.

Over time, Raju's worries deepen. The boy at the shop is not successful. It is losing money, the merchants who supply Raju stop doing so, and eventually the shop is taken from Raju and given to a new contractor. Raju takes it out on the porter's son but the boy's father interferes and insults him. The only thing that saves him is his mother, who comes to him when he is about to fight back more intensely. She drags her son away. He is immensely gloomy knowing all of his railway associations are over.

### Analysis

Raju's obsession with Rosie deepens, especially when Marco leaves her and she has nowhere to go but his house. He ignores the pricking of conscience and the advice of Gaffur and his mother (which is ironic given his advice to the villagers to heed the voice of conscience and the soul) to be with Rosie. He lets his store fall into ruin and eventually be taken from him. He insults the porter's boy and requires his mother to save him.

The irony in the novel lies, as Amar Nath Prasad notes, "in this that he guides other people, yet he fails to guide himself properly in his earlier life." It is "not Marco but Raju who becomes a permanent tourist—both physically and spiritually" and Raju "preaches the whole world to lead a life free of problems, but he himself failed to show or guide his own soul to the right path."



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Critic Tabish Khair explains how for almost all of *The Guide* Raju “is essentially a person who values himself by the Other.” All the way up through prison and most of his time as swami, “Raju essentially ingratiates himself all around: it is his habit to evaluate himself in the light of his relationship to the Other. He is an actor who plays the roles that other peoples thrust in to him and he is not unaware of this fact by the time he comes out of prison and embarks on his ambivalent sainthood.” Critic Michael Gorra agrees, explaining, “Raju takes no active role in shaping his own career. He becomes a tour guide by accident, because other people expect it of him; so too he becomes a swami.”

In addition, the cave serves as both an illustrative backdrop for the theme of the past and present, and as a general metaphor for Marco's ignorance. In the scene of Marco and Rosie discussing the dancing motif in the cave, Rosie comes to symbolize the present while Marco symbolizes the past. Rosie is a dancer in the classical manner but it is the conditions of modernity that allow her fame to spread as it does. Her dance, even though it is classical in theme, is juxtaposed against Marco's focus on "dead and decaying things." Rosie's sexuality and independence are fully of the modern moment while Marco's paternalism is of the past. As critic John Thieme writes, Marco is "resistant to any suggestion that the classical and the contemporary may be related" even when he sees the dancing motif on the cave walls.

Finally, the cave itself serves as a general metaphor for Marco's ignorance. When Marco goes to visit the cave to probe for new archaeological discoveries, his wife Rosie falls in love with their tour guide Raju. The two lovers find ways to keep themselves away while Marco is busy in the cave. The cave here stands for ignorance and Marco remains in the darkness until it is too late. To an extent, Marco chooses to be in the cave in the same way he never quite understands his wife's mind. He is always in the darkness of his own choosing.

### Chapter 8

*Raju*'s creditor, the merchant Sait, comes to see him and asks why he has not paid his dues for months when he used to be so regular. Raju is tired of the whole thing but asks for another week. He smiles listening to *Rosie* jangling in the other room. *The Sait* is exasperated and asks what world he thinks he lives in, and leaves wrathfully.

Rosie asks Raju who it was but he deflects; he does not want her to know about his troubles. Raju has to go to court though, and his mother is distraught. He has no friends but *Gaffur* and asks if Gaffur can help him finance Rosie's dancing career. Gaffur is sympathetic but declines because he has no money. He wishes Raju luck and leaves. Things continue to worsen financially for Raju. He withdraws everything from the bank and still has to deal with his court case regarding his debt. His mother is upset and wonders what happened to him. She complains but it seems like this is all she can do.

Raju is wrong in this assumption for one day his uncle drops in on them. He is the eldest brother and the family financial adviser. He is very well-off and imperious in his manner. Raju's mother had written to him for help and now he is here, immediately trying to pick a fight with Raju. It almost seems as if his mother is enjoying his predicament and Raju feels angry and confused. Rosie seems scared but Raju tells her not to worry, which calms her immediately. Raju is in a challenging mood but inside he still trembles.



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His uncle comes to watch the girl dancing and his eyes bulge with contempt and cynicism. He mocks Raju for being a dancer's boy and Raju lashes back at him. The older man is delighted to see spirit in his nephew. He then turns to Rosie and tells her she is not of their family, caste, or class; she was not invited, she is not welcome, and she will leave on the next train. She sobs upon hearing this. Raju flies at his uncle and knocks the cup out of his hand and tells him to get up. He spits that this is his sister's house. Raju's mother rails at Rosie and calls her a snake woman and that she made their lives terrible. Rosie cries that she will leave.

Raju insists that Rosie not pack and that they will not leave. He shuts his ears to his mother and uncle. The house calms for a time. When his uncle wakes up from a nap, he asks why Rosie isn't getting ready for the train. Raju bravely says they will not leave. His mother implores him to understand that Rosie is another man's wife. Raju knows this is true but can do nothing.

The arguments continue and finally Raju's mother decides she has to leave the house with her brother. Raju watches them pack up. He notes how frightening his uncle can be, and sees his mother's sad face. He feels sad as well but there are no other options for him. She wishes him good health and reminds him to light the lamps in the god's niche.

Rosie and Raju keep house like a married couple. He does little but watch her dance and sing and occasionally shop. She asks what his plans are and tells him she needs a full orchestra. He says that he will do what he can and that he has been thinking she needs a different stage name. She agrees and they decide upon Nalini. This augurs a new phase in Rosie's life, and the rest of the world will come to know her as Nalini.

Raju works to increase her visibility. He mixes with the boys at the Albert Mission School who are planning their annual social and its entertainment. He mentions Nalini and asks if they will come and see her. They are entranced by her and give her almost the whole show. Raju says they must provide the drummer and accompaniments and they happily agree.

### Analysis

As Raju's obsession with Rosie deepens, his life continues its downward spiral. He insults the Sait and has to go to trial for debt. He destroys his relationship with his mother and practically forces her out of her home. To be sure, his defense of Rosie as a lower-caste woman is admirable, and what his uncle says about her is very cruel, but Raju still utterly decimates his life and reputation.

Some critics argue that Raju's involvement with Rosie once she is living with him and his mother leads to positive character development. Raju knows nothing of dance or music but inspires Rosie to pursue it. Yes, it is somewhat self-interested because it is a way for him to maintain intimacy with her, but he does devote himself to giving her whatever she needs to make her dreams a reality.

He willingly, as S.P. Ranchan and G.R. Kataria writes, "incurs... the wrath of conventional society at large" and "grows out of his good-boy image and [revolts] against the Shadow-Masculine uncle who, he admits, was a 'terror' for him in his childhood." He "valiantly fights for Rosie," "slaughters' his uncle and outgrows his mother fixation." Overall, "the love of the 'serpent woman' Rosie thus transforms the fun-loving Raju into a responsible man who must grow out of the timorousness and indifference with which he encountered life."



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What is clear in all three of Raju's "guide" roles—Railway Raju, Rosie's manager and champion, and swami—is that he is almost completely Other-focused. He is a model of inauthenticity and its companion of self-estrangement.

Critic Tabish Khair sees Raju and many of Narayan's other characters as Other-defined, though, he concedes, "they are seldom completely rootless; and the main protagonists are never left out in a void of meaninglessness. They manage to make some meaning of life." They just do so, Khair argues, either half-heartedly, unwillingly, or inadvertently.

### Chapter 9

Rosie's fame skyrockets almost right away. Raju's importance also increases, as everyone seemed to know that he made her and she needed him. People seek him out and want to sit by him at shows. He makes everything precise and perfect and loves the showmanship. In public, they are restrained and formal, but in private Rosie excitedly embraces him and thanks him. Rosie's joy comes from reliving her evening show and thinking of all the garlands she receives. Raju focuses on their finances. An early issue is that the Sait by point of law manages to secure an attachment to Raju's property so Raju decides to sell the old house and move into a larger one since he and Rosie are doing so well. Oddly, Rosie is uncomfortable with this and has an attachment to the house, but she gives in. Raju has a moment of chagrin in regards to his mother and her house, but it passes.

The bigger house suits Rosie's burgeoning fame. There is plenty of space for her to practice, room for the permanent musicians, and of course room for servants and visitors. In regards to the visitors, Raju is cool to the supplicants but warm to all of the important people. He does try to limit whom Rosie can see, as he is coming to view her as his property and does not want her to be influenced by others. When someone gets through though, Rosie happily entertained for hours and hours. Raju does not like the other artists and performers because he feels like an interloper. Overall, Raju wants her to be happy but only in his company.

Over time, arguments crop up between the two of them, making them even more like husband and wife. They do not always have time for them, however, as they are traveling nearly twenty days a month. They are always on the move and Raju is always booking new shows and handling the details. When they go places, Rosie often suggests sites she'd like to see, but Raju simply says they will try and they never end up having time. Occasionally, Raju thinks about how Rosie seemed happier in their old small house with his mother and uncle.

Their monthly income is enormous but Raju is annoyed that money doesn't seem to be that important to Rosie. She seems weary nowadays. Raju tries to perk her up and make her laugh, which works for a time. For him, making the maximum amount of money they can is the only important thing in life; if they make less, then he is a failure. He has no interest in living more simply.



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In his free time, Raju loves to play cards with lofty personages for long stints, reveling in his own hospitality. He is now a notable figure hobnobbing with the elite and his ability to procure things and information is unfettered.

The only thing that casts a shadow on all of this is Marco. Raju had almost forgotten he'd existed and assumed Rosie did too. One day, however, the post brings a book to Raju and he is stunned to see that it is Marco's lavish and comprehensive history of South India. To his surprise, he sees that in one section Marco paid his thanks to Raju, his guide. He has no idea why he did it, and decides he cannot let Rosie see the book. She might become crazed or confused. He hides it in his liquor closet where no one goes.

A few days later, Rosie shoves a newspaper picture of Marco in front of Raju and asks if he's seen it. She is excited and says it is a good thing and he worked for this all his life. This talk disconcerts Raju, especially when she says she wants the book. Raju's secretary, Mani, looks curiously at Raju since he knew what came in the post, but says nothing.

After a week, Rosie approaches and demands to know where the book is. Raju asks how she knows about the book and assumes it is Mani. In bed, Rosie prepares for a fight but Raju tells her to go to sleep. She states forcefully that she is proud of Marco. She cries and Raju asks why she is behaving like this. He is her husband after all, she explains, and was kind to her. Exasperated, Raju says she speaks of him and the incident years ago in two ways. He can't understand her—he has done everything for her. Is she a liar? Is she tired of him?

Finally, Raju announces that they ought to go on holiday somewhere. This pleases Rosie but she is still unconvinced because Raju says they have to finish the booked performances. She admits she is very unhappy and the thought of performing like a parrot in a cage again makes her sick. Raju diverts her with laughter and their life falls into a routine for a while.

Things are uneventful. The couple is in Malgudi and Raju is tending to correspondence. To his surprise, he sees a letter addressed to Rosie/Nalini and decides he must open it. It is a letter from a lawyer asking for Rosie's signature because there is a box of jewels left in the custody of a Bank. After getting her signature, they will get Marco's and the jewels will be released to her.

Raju is delighted, wondering how much the jewels are worth. However, he decides he cannot show her the letter right away and hides it. That evening, his mind wanders. Why did Marco send this over now? Was this generosity, or a trap? Or was this just a calm, rational settling of affairs? He decides he can't show Rosie after how she's been recently; she may lose her head and be miserable and fight with Raju. He tries to get through the next days until they are on the move again.

In the evening, Raju avoids Rosie after dinner because his mind is scattered and he doesn't want to blurt anything out. He keeps thinking about how much jewelry there is. He falls asleep but wakes up in the middle of the night, concerned that maybe there is a time limit on the letter. Quietly sneaking to his closet, he only sees the lines: "per return post." His mind made up, he forges Rosie's signature, which he was used to doing by now. He runs out to the post office as early as possible, which causes the postman to make a casual remark.



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## B. A. DEPARTMENT MATERIAL

CLASS: -S. Y. B. A. Semester -4

SUBJECT: - MAIN PAPER- 8

Raju looks for the jewel box in the mail every day. They have to go out of town and he tells Mani to be on the lookout for a parcel that will need to be signed for. Upon returning from their trip, he is annoyed and perturbed that nothing came. His mind ruminates on what might be happening.

The evening of their return, Rosie has a performance at Kalipet. Raju accompanies her, of course, and is excited how much money this large, glamorous function will net them. Raju watches Rosie's dance for hours and marvels at her skill, but remembers his mother's comments about her being a serpent girl.

While Rosie is dancing, someone comes up and tells him the District Superintendent of Police wants him. Raju is friends with the man and curious as to what he might want. The Superintendent looks rueful and tells Raju that there is a warrant out for his arrest. Raju looks at the warrant and sees that Marco has said he committed forgery. Raju protests that the lady was busy and he had to sign for her. The Superintendent sighs and says this is serious. He will let Rosie finish the show, and then they will go to the magistrate to get a special surety bond.

Raju is numb and knows this is a terrible situation. When Rosie comes out, he ushers her quickly into the car. She talks volubly about the night and becomes silent and drowsy. Raju drops her off but before he leaves with the Superintendent, he tells Rosie what has happened. She does not break down but bitterly says she knew he was doing something wrong; it is karma. She looks down at the Superintendent and asks what they can do. He says nothing right now.

### Chapter 10

Raju has to spend a couple of nights in lockup like a low criminal. Rosie visits him and weeps that their money is all gone. When Raju gets out, he avoids Rosie in their home and sees that all the mastery has passed to her. She speaks to him like a tramp she has rescued, and she scrapes together all her resources to make it work. She tears up still, but Raju cannot help but feel self-pity. He cannot believe he was trapped by a low man like Marco. He can think of no one's troubles but his own.

Rosie and Raju fight about money. She says she is too embarrassed to take the rest of her shows. She snaps that she might go back to Marco. Raju cannot resist being cruel to her and she sighs that maybe the two of them should off themselves.

Rosie tells Raju she will not dance anymore even if Raju is free; this is not the life she envisioned. Everything changed once they lost the old home. Raju groans. Rosie states that she will pawn every last possession of hers to make things right but that once she is done Raju must leave her once and for all. She never wants to be with him again.

Rosie is as good as her word and takes on numerous engagements. She pays the debts and does what needs to be done. Raju is actually somewhat jealous of her self-reliance and forgets she is doing it for his sake. He realizes she could always manage without him or Marco.



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He engages a celebrity lawyer who is skilled in the courtroom. He is extremely expensive but Raju knows it is necessary. In the courtroom, he presents Raju's story in three acts: first, Marco as the villain who wanted to drive his wife mad; second, Raju saved her and made her an honor to the nation; third, the villain schemed and found a way to bring Raju down. Why did Marco wait so long? Why did he send the letter? In fact, the lawyer argues, the document arrived blank and someone else copied Rosie's signature and then it was taken to the police.

The prosecution is also strong, calling up Mani, the postmaster, and a handwriting expert. The judge sentences Raju to two years in prison. The lawyer is pleased, as he was probably due for seven.

Raju is considered a model prisoner—quiet, efficacious, intuitive, and hard-working. The guards like him, as do the other prisoners. He tells stories and becomes known as the Teacher. He works incessantly in the Superintendent's backyard garden and derives pleasure from watching things grow. Indeed, he even grows to like prison and is morose when he has to leave. He likes his quiet and modestly purposeful life.

In the paper, though, he sees Nalini's picture and notes that her empire is growing. It annoys and pains him that she is going on like this without him. He studies how much money she is probably making.

Mani comes to visit Raju once; he is the only visitor during the two years. Mani tells him how Rosie settled down in Madras and was doing well, and how she paid all the debts off. The only thing she took with her was Marco's book. Raju childishly bursts out in annoyance at this, asking if she was with him. Mani responds that after the trial they went their separate ways. Mani also tells him that his mother is doing well in the village (his mother had been present in court, but was decidedly upset and disappointed with the way Raju's life had turned out).

### Chapter 11

Raju continues and then finishes his narration. His voice cracks. [Velan](#) listens silently and respectfully. Raju waits for his anger and indignance, but it never comes. Velan says quietly that he does not know why the swami told him all this, and how kind it is. With these words Raju realizes he will never be left alone. Velan stands and promises no one will ever hear of this. He leaves.

A journalist hears of Raju's fasting and writes up a story that sparks public interest throughout the region. Telegrams start pouring in and out and the crowds around Raju begin to grow. Raju stands in the river for the allotted time and prays, and then rests to conserve his energy. When he sleeps, everyone is silent and still.

Each day, more people come. They swarm the temple and the waterhole and Raju is upset that he has no privacy and is never alone. He has a bit of stale food in his secret stash left, but it barely sustains him.



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At one point, he wishes he could yell at the crowd that he is a fraud and they ought to not bother with him, but he knows he cannot. His back is to the wall and this is what he must do.

Raju occasionally glares at Velan—it is this man who gave him this fate! He should have been eaten by a crocodile. Thinking about crocodiles, Raju remembers how the one that died was cut open and there were many jewels in there.

Raju looks at Velan again and his heart softens. He will give him a chance; he will conquer his own thoughts of food. He decides to eradicate all thoughts of food for ten days. This marks a change in him. For the first time ever, he is fully applying himself to something other than money or love, and he is doing something for others. He has a new strength and energy.

As the days pass, the “hum of humanity” (189) roars louder. Malgudi throngs with people, cars, and little shops. The people at Raju’s shrine crowd in on him so that Velan has to order him back. The busiest man there is an American named [Malone](#), who secures Raju’s permission to film an interview with him. Raju is weak but agrees. He answers Malone’s questions politely. Doctors also visit Raju and say his blood pressure is no good and one of his kidneys may be affected. They seem worried. Malone enlists the schoolmaster to perform some of Raju’s tasks for the camera.

On the eleventh day, Velan and his assistants have to set up a cordon to keep people from getting too close to Raju. Velan cries that he needs air and that is all he has now. The doctors examine Raju again and say the swami is in dangerous straits. A telegram from the government orders Raju to cooperate and states that he cannot risk his life.

Raju smiles at this from his mat and beckons Velan. He asks Velan to help him to his feet. With the help of another, Raju walks down to the river. Everyone is solemn and silent. Raju haltingly steps into the river and mutters prayers. It is hard to hold him. He opens his eyes and looks around and says to Velan that it is raining in the hills and he can feel it coming up over his feet and legs. He sags down.

### Analysis

Raju is arguably at his worst once he has dedicated himself to Rosie’s career and manages its rapid ascent. He is greedy and materialistic, consumed by his newfound influence. He forgets that Rosie is the real star and takes credit for her fame. He ignores that she is unhappy and merely tries to distract or manipulate her when she voices her concerns. He wants to limit her interaction with other people and comes to see her as merely his property; she can only be happy if it is with/because of him. His talents as a guide serve him well in this new life, but here the stakes are higher and he messes up his life as well as Rosie’s (for a time). And Marco, whom Raju conveniently forgot existed, has the last laugh when he sets up the situation in which Raju forges Rosie’s signature in his desire for even more wealth.





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The main questions at the end of the novel are: did Raju actually attain sainthood? Was he truly transformed? Were the rains really coming? Did he die? Let's take the first two questions. Critics differ, of course, on whether or not Raju really attained sainthood and was transformed. In fact, this is one of the genius aspects of Narayan's novel for it is left ambiguous. R.C. Ghai is unconvinced, calling Raju's answers to Malone's questioning "vague and untruthful." He does not at all sound like a man "who obtained release from self-deception." Throughout the entire novel Raju cannot be taken seriously, so why now?

Other critics believe that Raju does indeed change. S.P. Ranchan and G.R. Kataria see Velan picking up where Rosie left off and leading Raju to a transformation that is authentic and meaningful. When Raju looks at the gratitude of the people, and at Velan in particular, he is filled with "a true and genuine concern." Velan listens to his entire sordid tale and does not judge him but rather still sees him as a true holy man. Sure, Velan may be evincing his lesser intellect, but this has an impact on Raju. As David Atkinson notes, "Velan's innocent faith has a dramatic effect on Raju. He comes to believe in the role into which he has been cast, and, in the end, sacrifices his life for those he originally intended to dupe."

Ranchan and Kataria write that Raju "supplicates to the Mother archetype (in the name of the entire humanity surging forth towards him with deep devotion) to bless them and bless the parched earth with rain." R.N. Arya calls his transformation "gradual, natural, if also wonderful" and says that even though Raju's ultimate fate is unknown, "what matters is that it is only after he stopped thinking about himself that he is free from attachment of any kind. He does become the "guide," but of a superior mould." He accepts suffering and the possibility of death, which certainly makes him seem like a different person at the end of the novel.

As for the fate of the village, Narayan deliberately leaves them ambiguous. It is possible to see Raju as successful, as so in tune with nature and God that he can see the rains coming. It is also possible to read the last lines as merely the ravings of a sick and dying man; there is no proof the rains are coming at all. And Raju living or dying is up to the interpretation of the reader, for "sagging down" is not dying, but one must concede that Raju's health was faltering terribly and the walk to the river could have finished him off. John Thieme sums this up cogently: "In short, *The Guide* resists any form of closure. The ending raises the possibility that some kind of spiritual transformation may be taking place within Raju and that this may be accompanied by divine intervention to end the drought, but the final sections are narrated in a deadpan, documentary-like manner, leaving the possibilities that Raju remains a charlatan and that the drought will continue as a reasonable alternative inference."